

# TUT announces winners of architectural competition

Marco du Plessis, an architectural student at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Pretoria, has been named regional winner of Corobrik's Architectural Student of the Year competition. Du Plessis won the first prize of R8,000, second prize of R6,000 went to Vidette McLellan, and a tie for third prize of R4,000 each was won by Mathew Purdon and Manuel Pedro.



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Allin Dangers, Corobrik's director of sales for the inland region, presented prizes to architectural thesis students at the university. "It had become essential in quality architectural solutions today to combine creative design and specification that is in harmony with the natural environment, providing not only a practical solution in the context of the brief given, but an architecture that evokes a sense of inclusiveness amongst the broader South African community," Dangers said.

"The students who are receiving awards are those who have demonstrated a remarkable grasp of the complexities facing architecture today and have shown exceptional flair and skill in incorporating this in their design work," he said.

## Facility for herbalists

Du Plessis' entry is the design of a healthcare and research facility for natural medicine in Hatfield, Pretoria. Du Plessis says herbalism has been practiced by various cultures in countries around the world for thousands of years. South Africa is home to a rich variety of medicinal plant species and our cultures have knowledge of traditional medicines and treatments which is part of our heritage. He believes this heritage should be protected, studied, documented and further researched to ensure the safe and effective use of herbal remedies for future generations.

McLellan's thesis is 'The Design of a Centre for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Pretoria on the site of the Old Jewish Synagogue.' She says the old synagogue on Paul Kruger Street facilitated some of the most pivotal events in apartheid history, namely, the treason trial of former president Nelson Mandela, and the Steve Biko inquest. For decades restoration proposals due to the costs and the impractical reuse of the building and surrounding site have prevented restoration.

McLellan's design proposal attempts to make the synagogue accessible to the public by placing a Narrative Centre on the adjacent site. The centre will create and archive narratives from indigenous cultures to slow westernisation and the loss of authentic cultures.

## **Rejuvenation of inner-city**

In shared third place Mathew Purdon has designed a creative hub by remodelling Burlington Arcade in central Pretoria. The dissertation responds to Pretoria's current urban situation. The design of a Creative Hub will rejuvenate Pretoria's Burlington Arcade near Church Square. Pretoria's arcades were once a popular spot for people to meet, but in recent times, they have become dangerous. The Creative Hub becomes an incubator space for the creative industry, as well as providing an incentive for the rejuvenation of the inner-city of Pretoria.

Manuel Pedro has designed an Artisan Skills Training Centre in Mamelodi. He believes that the shortage of skills in South Africa is one of the key factors preventing the achievement of targeted economic growth. Mamelodi has negative perceptions with crime a daily reality for many of its residents. This was taken into account when the concept was determined and the core principle is to provide learners with a safe and healthy environment which will equip them with skills in a variety of artisan fields.

Du Plessis will be representing the Tshwane University of Technology for the coveted Architectural Student of the Year award in April.

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